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U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park has been appointed to the new Veterans and Military Quality of Life Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

The subcommittee will govern funding for all programs under the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, along with pay, health-care and housing programs under the secretary of defense. With more than \$150 billion in funding, the new subcommittee ranks third of 10 appropriations subcommittees in Congress that approve all federal funding.

"During the last four years, I have led efforts to combine VA and Defense health-care programs," said Kirk. "With this new assignment, I can accelerate the creation of a new VA/Navy hospital in North Chicago to ensure the veterans of northern Illinois receive the health care they need."

Kirk retained his seat on the subcommittee governing appropriations for the departments of Commerce, State and Justice. As a member of this subcommittee, Kirk authored legislation to double the reward for the arrest of Osama bin Laden and new programs to control the illegal flow of Ecstasy into the United States.